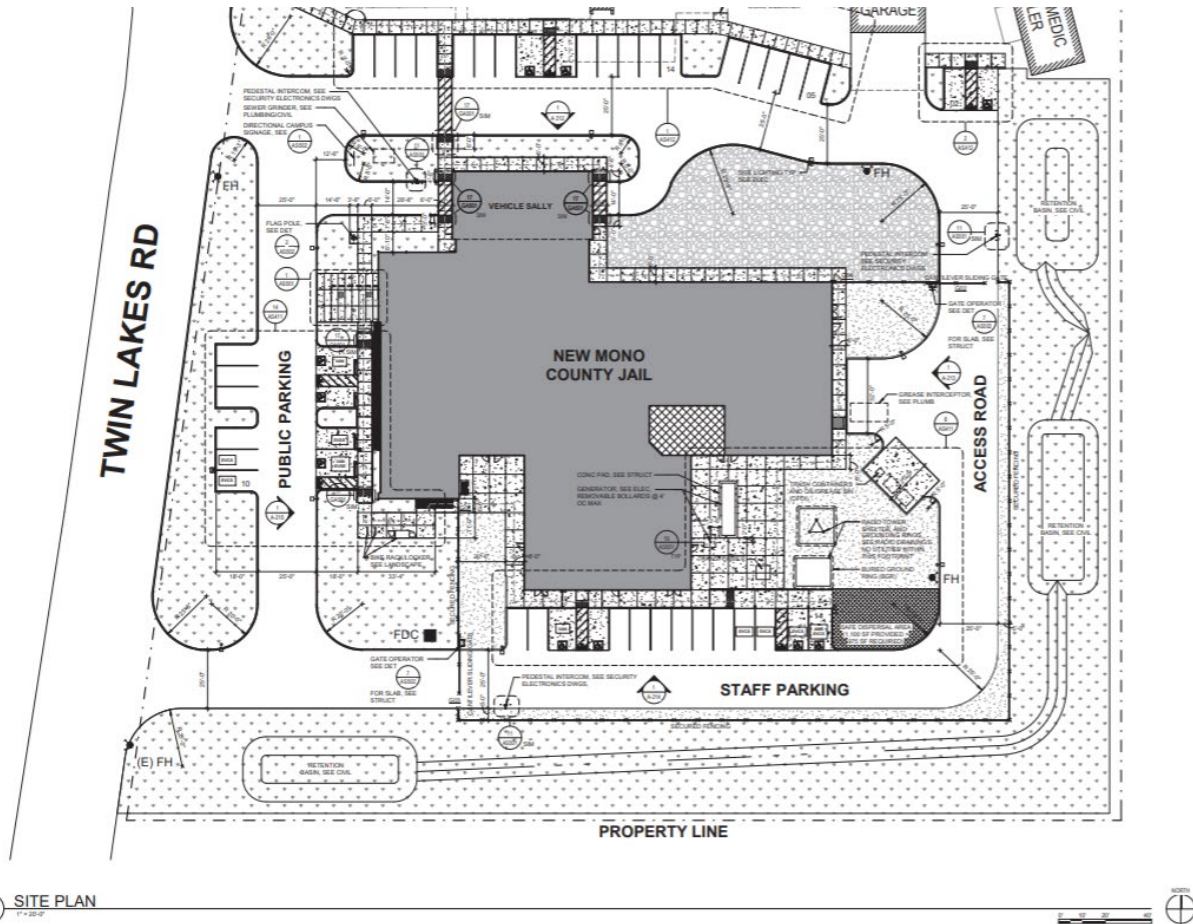


# Director Review 24-003 Mono County Jail

**APPLICANT:** Mono County Public Works

**SUBJECT PROPERTY:** P.O. Box 457, Bridgeport CA, 93517

**PROPOSAL:** Two components of the Mono County Jail Facility project deviate from the standards of the General Plan but may be approved by a Director Review permit: (1) A proposed 12' screening/security fence exceeds the 7' fence height limitation and (2) a temporary construction trailer is proposed to be placed on site during construction.



**FIGURE 1: SITE PLAN**

Pursuant to the Mono County General Plan, Chapter 31 Director Review Procedures, based upon the following findings, you are hereby notified that Director Review 24-003 has been:

- Granted as requested.
- Granted subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.
- Denied

## BACKGROUND

A new county jail is under construction in Bridgeport. The Mono County Board of Supervisors approved the project on February 21, 2017, and construction began in 2021.

Demolition of the previously extant structure, a vacant hospital, has been completed and construction of the new facility is scheduled to begin in late 2024 or early 2025. The jail will accept inmates starting in 2026.

## PROJECT SETTING

Located at 221 Twin Lakes Road (APN 008-080-007-000), and with a lot size of 3.38 acres, the land is designated as Public or Quasi-Public Facility (PF). A single, privately owned parcel designated for agriculture (APN 008-080-008-000, designated AG-DC for agriculture with development credits) borders the property on three sides. Directly across Twin Lakes Road to the west lies another large parcel with the same owner and AG-DC designation.

To the north, land uses are a mix of Multi-Family Residential – Low (MFR-L) and Commercial (C), with a few scattered PF parcels. The Eastern Sierra Unified School District offices and elementary school are located approximately 0.1 miles northeast (measured from parcel boundary to parcel boundary).



FIGURE 2: LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to deviate from the standards of the General Plan in two respects: (1) A proposed 12' screening/security fence exceeds the 7' fence height limitation and (2) a temporary construction trailer is proposed to be placed on site during construction. Both may be approved through a Director Review permit.

Because the development standards specific to land-use designation PF do not address either fences or trailers, general provisions apply.

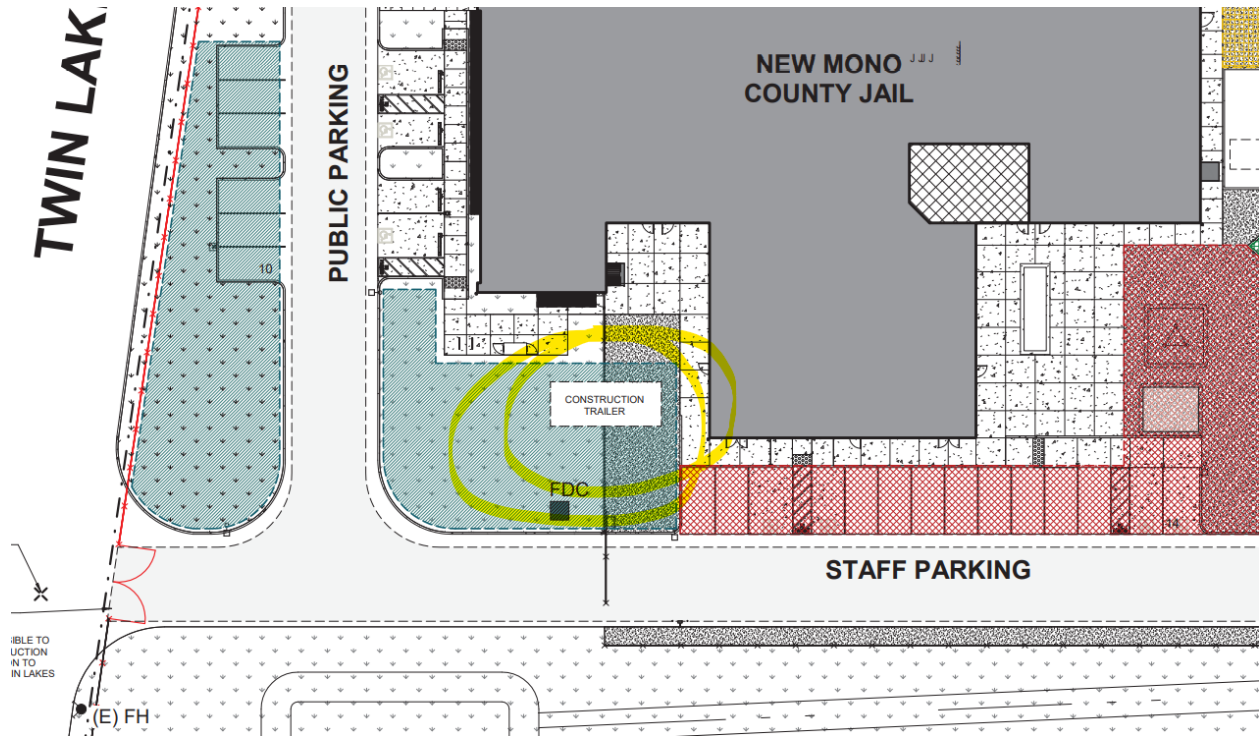
TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION TRAILER

The applicant proposes to place a construction trailer on the property to serve as an office for the duration of construction. As seen in Figure 3, the preferred location is in the south-western quadrant of the area enclosed by the access road that circles the main building, set close to the footprint of the jail and away from the street. The trailer is anticipated not to exceed 42' long by 12' wide.

MCGP §04.040.A. allows for placement and use of a recreational vehicle during construction of a primary structure, subject to Director Review and specified conditions.

A. Placement and Use of Recreational Vehicles (RVs) on Vacant Property.

1. RV placement and use of undeveloped property during construction of a main building shall be permitted only for a short duration and shall not exceed one year, unless the Director Review permit is renewed annually following notice to contiguous property owners.



**FIGURE 3: LOCATION OF CONSTRUCTION TRAILER**

SECURITY FENCE

Applicant proposes to surround the southeastern quadrant of the property with a 12' security fence consisting of stacked panels of chain-link mesh, anchored by tall posts. In order to preserve community character, the addition of dark slatted screening to the chain-link mesh will be required as a condition of approval. The proposed 12' height does not include the three strands of barbed wire strung above the top rail of the fence.

Four gates allow entry to the enclosed area. Two provide pedestrian access, both located on the western side of the fence, facing Twin Lakes Road. These swinging gates, made of chain-link mesh, are 7' high and 4' wide.

Two cantilever sliding gates provide automobile access. These gates, 12' high and 24' wide, slide open along the inside of the fence where it intersects with the access road, one on the western and the other on the northern side of the fence.

The location of the proposed fence is pictured in Figure 4, its appearance is detailed in Figure 5, and Figure 6 offers an aerial rendering of the proposed jail facility, including the fence.

The proposed fencing encloses the staff parking lot as well as several utility structures. Among the utility structures are a future radio tower which may require separate permitting, trash containers, a generator and a transformer.

The Mono County General Plan (MCGP) limits fences to a maximum of 7 feet in height, but allows for higher fences subject to use permit if they do not obstruct the line of sight from vehicles in roadways or driveways (§04.160). The main building, with a proposed maximum height of 25', not to exceed 35', stands between Twin Lakes Road and the proposed fence, and would partially screen the fence from viewers on the street or in the facility's publicly accessible roadways. There are no roads on the agricultural property where the fence is most visible, and thus no chance of obstructing the line of sight for vehicles from the south or east.

According to §32.020 of the MCGP, "the Director may substitute use permit procedures specified in other chapters of the Land Development Regulations with a Director Review (DR) subject to Chapter 31, when sufficient standards have been adopted, the project is minor in nature, and the project is exempt from CEQA."

Chapter 31, §31.010, "allows the Director to issue a permit for planning projects without the delay and expense of a public hearing as long as the project is exempt from CEQA and is not controversial or environmentally sensitive."

The addition of security fencing to an approved jail project can be considered minor in nature as such a security feature is common with jails. The General Plan contains sufficient standards to evaluate the fence, including guidance on aesthetics and color, as well as ensuring line of sight for vehicles. The project is exempt from CEQA and the conditions of approval, which include incorporating dark slatted screening into the fencing, ensure that General Plan standards have been met.

For these reasons, the project has been downgraded from a Use Permit to a Director Review permit.

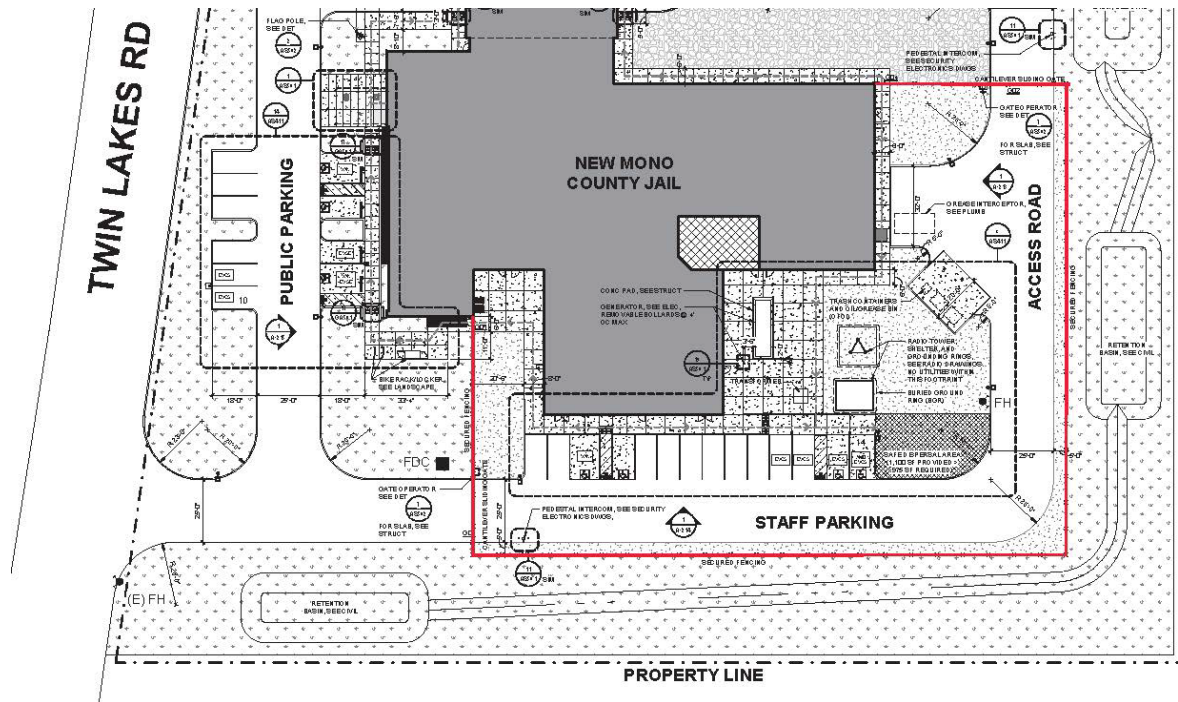


FIGURE 4: LOCATION OF PROPOSED SECURITY FENCE (LABELED, INDICATED IN RED)

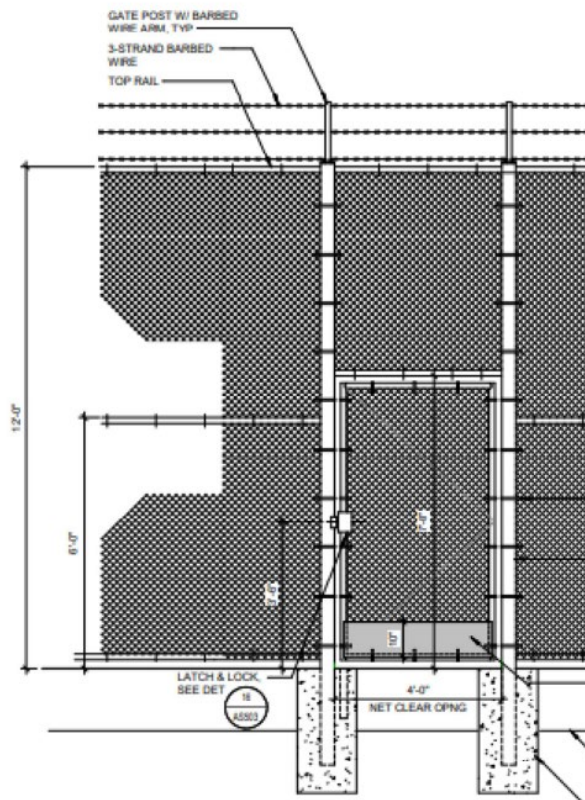


FIGURE 5: JAIL FENCE DETAIL

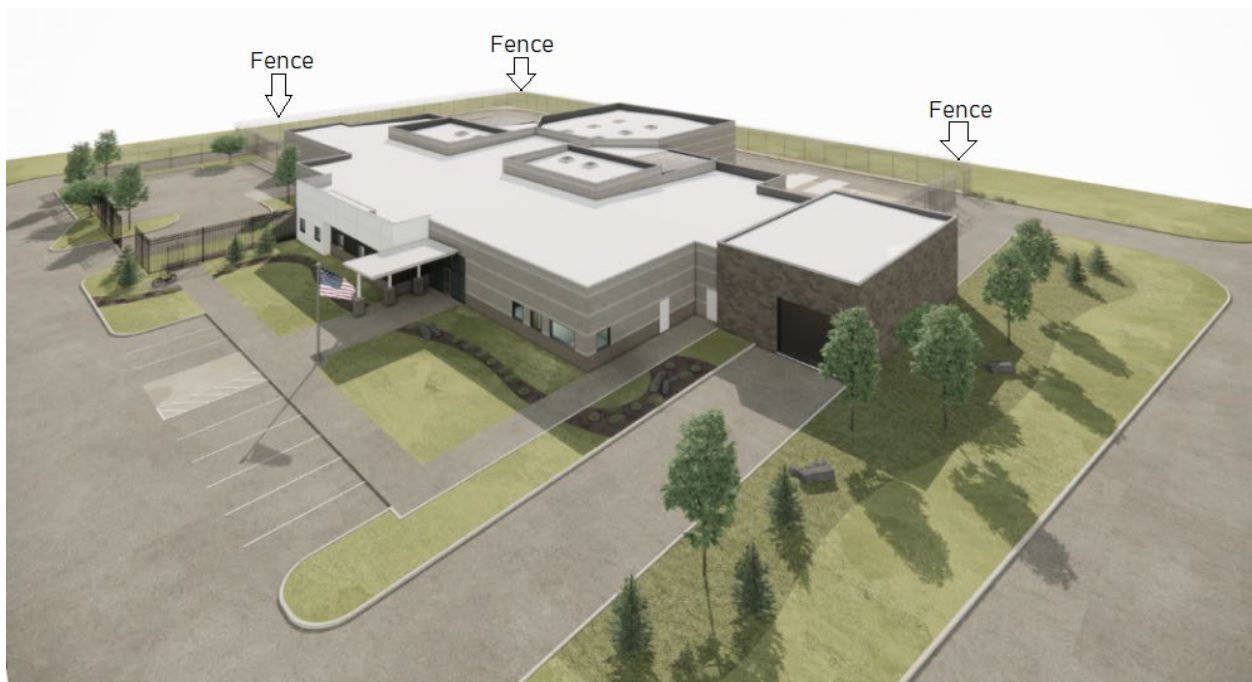


FIGURE 6: AERIAL RENDERING, SHOWING PROPOSED FENCE

## DIRECTOR REVIEW FINDINGS

Under MCGP Chapter 31.030, the Community Development Director may issue a Director Review permit after making all of the following findings:

1. *All applicable provisions of the Land Use Designations and Land Development Regulations are complied with, and the site of the proposed use is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the use and to accommodate all yards, walls and fences, parking, loading, landscaping and other required features.*

### Construction Trailer

MCGP §04.040.A. allows for placement and use of a recreational vehicle during construction of a primary structure, subject to Director Review.

The proposed use of the temporary construction trailer will not limit or alter the eventual primary use of the county jail. Conditions require that use of the trailer will cease after construction is complete. The 3.38-acre site is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the trailer and the footprint for the main building while maintaining access.

### Security Fence

The county jail is located on land designated PF, which has no minimum setbacks. The site is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the fence, along with all other required features. A building permit will be obtained, and the fence does not prevent any applicable design standards from being met.

- 2. The site for the proposed use relates to streets and highways adequate in width and type to carry the quantity and kind of traffic generated by the proposed use.*

The fence will have no impact on traffic.

Traffic generated by construction of the new county jail was considered and approved with the project. The construction trailer will not increase traffic, and the convenience of locating office functions on-site may decrease traffic.

- 3. The proposed use will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the area in which the property is located.*

#### Construction Trailer

A temporary construction fence surrounds the parcel, 7' tall and made of chain-link mesh with light tan privacy slats and gray mesh-fabric covers over the exterior. The temporary fence would screen the construction trailer from view. The standard conditions of §04.040 of the MCGP concerning temporary RV placement have been included, minimizing impacts to surrounding properties, and ensuring that use of the trailer will cease after construction is complete.

#### Security Fence

The fence, positioned well away from the street, would not obstruct line-of-sight from vehicles on the street, or in public driveways. Nor, with the addition of dark slatted screening required as a condition of approval, would the fence significantly disrupt the visual character of the neighborhood.

Thus, neither of the proposed uses would be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the area in which the property is located.

- 4. The proposed use is consistent with the map and text of the Mono County General Plan.*

#### Construction Trailer

The use of a construction trailer is permitted for a short duration of up to one year, and may be renewed annually upon notice to neighboring property owners. The standard conditions of §04.040 of the MCGP for temporary RV placement have been included as project conditions.

#### Security Fence

Higher fences are allowed in §04.160 of the general provisions, subject to use permit, so long as they do not obstruct line of sight from vehicles in roadways or driveways. The proposed security fence encloses an area partially screened from the street by the main building, and the surrounding agricultural property has no roads. Line of sight for vehicles is not obstructed. Thus, the fence may be permitted.

Enhanced security is essential to the proposed jail, meets the requirements for a use permit, and its inclusion in the design of a jail facility should be considered both minor and non-controversial. The project as a whole is exempt from CEQA. Therefore, and per §32.020 and §31.010 of the MCGP, the proposed 12' fence is being approved through this Director Review permit.

5. *The improvements indicated on the development plan are consistent with all adopted standards and policies set forth in the Land Development Regulations, this General Plan and any applicable Area Plan.*

#### Construction Trailer

The use of a trailer during construction is an allowable use subject to a Director Review under §04.040.A of the MCGP. Required factors have been considered and required conditions included.

#### Security Fence

The parcel's LUD is PF, for Public and Quasi-Public Functions. A county jail is appropriate to this designation and enhanced security fencing is essential to its primary use.

The project as proposed meets all requirements necessary to justify a downgrade from use permit to Director Review permit.

6. *The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)*

The project qualifies for a Class 3 categorical exemption under CEQA Guideline 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.

Guideline 15303(c) exempts offices, not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances and not exceeding 2500 square feet of floor area. The construction trailer will be used as an office while it is on site, will not involve the use of hazardous substances, and will not exceed the maximum floor area.

Guideline 15303(e) exempts accessory structures, and includes fences among the listed examples.

The project is not expected to cause any significant environmental impacts.

## CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. Dark slatted screening shall be added to the security fence, minimizing the visual impact of the fence on nearby properties.
2. Except as otherwise stated in this Director Review, project shall comply with all Mono County regulations, including, but not limited to, General Plan requirements and Mono County Building Division, Environmental Health, and Public Works Department requirements.
3. The Environmental Health Department shall review and approve water and sanitation methods for trailer use. All utilities shall be connected prior to occupancy. If the trailer contains a restroom, it must be made available to inspectors during work hours.
4. The applicant shall obtain any necessary permits for the RV use, such as a temporary building permit for electrical hookup, prior to RV placement.
5. The use of the construction trailer, limited to one year per MCGP 04.040, shall be discontinued after construction has completed. If there is a demonstrated need, the Director Review may be renewed annually upon application and notice to contiguous property owners.
6. The property shall be maintained in a neat and orderly fashion during construction.
7. The construction trailer shall be placed in a manner and the property maintained in a fashion that minimizes noise and impacts to neighboring parcels. Use of night lighting on and outside the trailer



shall be fully shielded and downward directed, and in accordance with Mono County Dark Sky regulations (Chapter 23 of the Mono County General Plan).

8. Termination. A Director Review shall terminate, and all rights granted therein shall lapse, and the property affected thereby shall be subject to all the provisions and regulations applicable to the land use designation in which such property is classified at the time of such abandonment, when any of the following occur:
  - A. There is a failure to commence the exercise of such rights, as determined by the Director, within two years from the date of approval thereof. Exercise of rights shall mean substantial construction or physical alteration of property in compliance with the terms of the Director Review.
  - B. There is discontinuance for a continuous period of one year, as determined by the Director, of the exercise of the rights granted.
  - C. No extension is granted as provided in Section 31.080.
9. Extension: If construction of the county jail has not concluded after one year, the applicant may apply for an extension for an additional one year. Any request for extension shall be filed at least 60 days prior to the date of expiration and shall be accompanied by the appropriate fee. Upon receipt of the request for extension, the Planning Division shall review the application to determine the extent of review necessary. Conditions of Approval for the Director Review may be modified or expanded, including revision of the proposal, if deemed necessary. The Planning Division may also deny the request for extension. Exception to this provision is permitted for those Director Reviews approved concurrently with a tentative parcel or tract map; in those cases, the approval period(s) shall be the same as for the tentative map.
10. Revocation: The Planning Commission may revoke the rights granted by a Director Review, and the property affected thereby shall be subject to all of the provisions and regulations of the Land Use Designations and Land Development Regulations applicable as of the effective date of revocation. Such revocation shall include the failure to comply with any condition contained in the Director Review or the violation by the owner or tenant of any provision pertaining to the premises for which such Director Review was granted. Before revocation of any permit, the commission shall hold a hearing thereon after giving written notice thereof to the permitted at least 10 days in advance of such hearing. The decision of the commission may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors in accordance with Chapter 47, Appeals, and shall be accompanied by an appropriate filing fee.

This Director Review Permit shall become effective ten (10) days following the issuance of the Director's decision. This decision may be appealed within ten (10) days by filing a written notice of appeal with the Secretary of the Planning Commission. If an appeal is filed, the permit will not be issued until the appeal is considered and a decision is rendered by the Planning Commission.

PREPARED BY: Erin Bauer, Mono County Community Development Department

DATE OF DECISION: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

Wendy Sugimura, Community Development Director